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ABSTRACT

Philippine students in grades K-6, representing different socioeconomic classes, participated in individual elicitation sessions. Using Pilipino (Tagalog) as the language of elicitation, experimenters used pictorial stimuli to elicit specific structures of English grammar, in order to discover if the subjects had mastered these structures. Only the results for middle-income students are disclosed in this preliminary report. Findings cover the acquisition of the following features: noun subsystem (plurals and pronominal system), verbal subsystem questions, relative clauses, and complements (gerund and infinitive). Age of acquisition of certain features was found to vary according to sex. Time lags between year of entry into the syllabus and year of feature acquisition are specified. Coping strategies of the Filipino English-learner at the morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels are detailed. It is concluded that, in general, the Filipino child learning English through a school bilingual program does not master the structures necessary for the initial stage of language learning even after six years. Implications for curriculum development are set forth. (JB)

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Becoming Bilingual in English in a Philippine Setting

A Partial Report of a Manila Sample

ANDREW GONZALEZ

Studies on the acquisition of English in the Philippines, and therefore, of bilingualism, have focused thus far on the product rather than the process.

There have been studies of the distinctive features of Philippine English, fossilization of specific errors in the speech of even well-educated Filipino speakers of English, contrastive analyses of English and Philippine languages, error studies, and as a result of various summative evaluations of components of the Philippine educational system, the achievement in English at various school-leaving ages (the end of primary schooling, the end of secondary schooling) has been measured using various testing instruments.

English in the Philipines is for the most part learnt in a school environment through the teaching of English in schools from the first grade on, and through its use as a medium of instruction for science and mathematics under the existing (since 1974) Bilingual Education Policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In the urban areas, especially in Metro Manila, and in more affluent households, both in Manila and in other urban areas, motivation and stimulation for the learning of English even before formal schooling are made possible through access to the mass media, especially radio, television, and the cinema (in that order).

Not looked at closely enough thus far, however, has been the *process* of acquiring English among Filipino children in school.

While the syllabus of English teaching and the prescribed scope and sequence guide for each grade may provide clues as to *what* is being taught, and the teaching materials as well as class-room inspections, clues as to *how* English is being taught, we can no longer assume that what is taught is always learnt and that what is learnt is necessarily in the same order in which it is taught, based on reports of studies on the acquisition process completed in other countries.

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More specifically, for the Philippine setting, it is highly desirable, for language planning and programming purposes, to know which structures of English are learnt first, in what order, and in which grades these are mastered.

Finally, if a specific grade level can be pinpointed as the locus for what I would like to call the "acquisition year" for many structures, then perhaps one may likewise pinpoint a certain grade level or a set number of years after which one can assert, given specific social conditions, particular subjects, and definite syllabi, that the elementary stage of English acquisition has been reached. To be able to point to such a grade level, where a clustering of structures seems to be mastered, would be useful for language programming.

More general considerations, based on the findings, would of course have bearing on current notions of transitional grammars and invite comparisons with similar studies completed elsewhere in different social and scholastic settings.

Method and Subjects

Method. A cross-sectional study of male and female subjects at various grade levels, from different socioeconomic classes, was planned. Individual elicitation sessions with each subject were held with the help of graduate students enrolled in a class on the Psychological Foundations of Bilingual Education under the Ateneo de Manila University–Philippine Normal College–De La Salle University Consortium in Bilingual Education.[1] Using pictures as stimuli, and Pilipino (Tagalog), the first language of the subjects, as the language of elicitation, specific structures were elicited to find out if the subjects had mastered these structures of English grammar.

Subjects. The subjects were male and female, randomly selected from each grade level, 15 for each sex, from Kindergarten 1 and 2, Grade 1 up to Grade 6 (8 levels). Socioeconomic status was controlled by having three separate groups: high income, middle income, and low income, depending on the type of school and the tuition structure of the school. All were urban samples.

The subject grid was thus composed of 30 students (15 girls, 15 boys) for eight grade levels (Kindergarten 1 and 2, Grades 1 to 6) in three different types of schools (see Table 1). Although the children

are in the elementary school for eight years, no formal instruction in English is given in Kindergarten 1 and 2, where the medium of instruction is totally Pilipino (Tagalog). Incidental use of English in songs and instructions is made, but formal instruction in English and use of it as a medium of instruction under the Bilingual Education Program begins only in Grade 1. This should be kept in mind in examining the tables.

Instruments

Three instruments were developed and pilot tested before actual use in elicitation sessions which were carried out by pairs of graduate students (see Appendix A for an outline of the items to be elicited by the instruments)

The first instrument (Noun Sub-System) elicited forms for the regular plural form of nouns, the genitive form of nouns, genders of pronouns, genitive and accusative forms of pronouns.

The second instrument (Verb Sub-System) elicited forms for *be*, the form *-ing*, the future form *will*, the regular past forms *-d/-ed*, irregular past forms (*came, gave, went, sang, taught*), the *-s* form of the habitual present, the past progressive-simple past form contrast, the present perfect form for recently completed action, and the past perfect form for a past event before another past event.

The third instrument (Questions) elicited forms of *yes-no* questions and of information questions.

The fourth instrument tested for acquisition of relative clauses in embedded structures.

The fifth instrument elicited gerundive and infinitival complements in the verb phrase.

Findings

Only the samples from the middle-income school (boys and girls) are reported in this partial and preliminary report.

In discussing the results, summarized in Tables 2–5, the following considerations should be borne in mind:

Specific structures were elicited; for some of these structures, there was more than one item testing the structure. Scores of the subjects (15 boys and 15 girls for each level or grade) were tabulated,

the maximum score for each structure depending on the number of items eliciting that structure. A two-way analysis of variance was then done on these raw scores, using an 8 x 2 factorial design (8 grade levels: Kindergarten 1, Kindergarten 2, Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and two sexes: Male and Female). Factor A was random, Factor B was fixed.

The statistical computations were performed with a Tandy Corporation Radio-Shack TRS/80 computer with a 16-K capacity, using a two-way ANOVA program developed by the Statistical Assistance for Research (STAR) office of De La Salle University.

The items elicited tested for production (not recognition) of grammatical forms (not concepts).

We considered a structure as acquired if at least 80 percent of the subjects in each group (12 out of 15) scored perfect for each item or cluster of items testing the same structure.

We defined Acquisition Year in terms of criteria suggested by the design itself: (1) the mean for that year had to be significantly higher ($p < .001$) than the previous year's; (2) the mean for the succeeding year was not significantly higher than that year's; (3) the mean was equivalent to 80 per cent or more. Acquisition years are indicated by squares in the tables.

The basic limitations of the data are the limitations arising from difference in the responses of children, the interaction with different elicitors (some more simpatico than others) and the limitations of the limitations of the instrument itself, which took only a sampling of structures that we considered were indicative of mastery of basic English.

It should also be noted that the data were gathered from January to March (1979), the fourth and last quarter of the academic year; perhaps the differences would have been more transparent had we started at the beginning of the school year.

The Noun Sub-System:

Table 2 summarizes the means for various levels. Differences between the sexes (masculine and feminine) were found not to be significant and have not been included in the Table, although the trend indicates that the boys scored better than the girls and seemed to have learnt the noun sub-system structures tested earlier than the girls for all items in Table 2.

The interaction effects are not regular since both groups eventually end up mastering the same items and therefore scoring perfectly. Interaction between A and B factors in the analysis of variance, because attributable to the grade levels, has not been indicated in this preliminary report.

What Table 2 shows is that the regular plural form (*-s*) is acquired rather early (Grade 2); however, the genitive form of nouns (*'s*) is acquired rather late (in Grade 6). From the responses of the subjects, the more common form of indicating possession instead of *-s* is the use of the prepositional phrase (*house of the woman* instead of *women's house*), undoubtedly a transfer effect of the first language Tagalog, in which one indicates possession by saying *bahay ng babae* 'house of the woman'.

The pronominal system, with its gender distinctions, is acquired by Grade 3 in its nominative forms, the genitive and objective forms are attained a year later, in Grade 4.

Verbal Sub-System:

Table 3 indicates the means and acquisition years for the structures under the verbal sub-system.

In general, the boys learn the verbal structures earlier than the girls (not indicated in the tables), except for the irregular past forms and the past progressive–simple past form contrast ("I was eating when he arrived"); the girls scored significantly better ($p < .05$) on these forms. The boys scored significantly better with regard to the correct use of *are*, the habitual present *-s* form, the present perfect and the past perfect forms ($p < .05$). The latter two structures using the perfect forms were not acquired by the girls even in Grade 6 (they did not attain an average of at least 80 per cent).

The acquisition years for the various structures are:

Structures	*Grade*
Be forms Present progressive form	2
Future form Regular past form	3
Irregular past forms	4

Habitual Present (*-s* form)	5
Past progressive–simple past form contrast	
Present and past perfect forms	6 (boys only)

Questions:

Table 4 summarizes the data for different types of questions (*yes-no* questions and *wh*-questions or information questions).

The means of the boys and girls for each structure show no clear trend as to which group learns the structures earlier, except for *whom* and *why*, where the differences are significant ($p < .01$) in favour of the boys. *Whom* had not been mastered (at least 80 per cent correct responses) even by boys in Grade 6.

The acquisition years are:

Structure	*Grade*
Yes-No questions using *is-are*	4
can	
Yes-No questions using *does-do*	5
Information Questions using	
what	2
who	3
why	5
how	6

However, neither the boys nor the girls reached the level of acquisition (80 per cent) of *which* and *whom* questions even in Grade 6.

The early acquisition of *what* questions is easily explainable by the repetition of questions such as "What's your name?" and "What's this?", which are quite common in beginning classes. Moreover, *what* and *who* questions call for the same type of permutation transformation (exchange of positions between the front and end nouns) needed.

Both *why* and *how* questions call not only for WH-fronting but likewise auxiliary-subject inversion, which is more complicated.

The difficulties with *whom* are partially the objective morph (*-m*) the status of which is uncertain except in Formal English. *Which* is difficult because it is marked not only [definite] but is likewise marked [+ partitive] (which one amone several?).

Note that *does-do* questions are acquired in Grade 5, the same year for the acquisition of the *-s* form of the habitual present; this is understandable since the *-s* form is also needed for *does* questions.

Relative Clauses:

Table 5 contains a summary of data for relative clauses, which prove quite difficult for boys and girls. By Grade 6, only *who* meets the criteria for acquisition, and then only in the last year of elementary schooling. *Who* questions call for only the WH substitution and fronting, with no other inversions with auxiliary, the only added difficulty being the embedding and the substitution of *who* for an NP which is already present in the matrix sentence.

Relativization presents only formal difficulties and does not show inability to handle more than one clause simultaneously, since the answers of the students are grammatically correct but avoid embeddings, a familiar enough strategy to avoid complicated structures (see below for a discussion of coping strategies).

Complements:

Table 6 contains limited data for gerundive and infinitival complements. By Grade 5, infinitival complements are quite easily mastered. The gerundive complements are mastered as early as Grade 4; perhaps this is due to the children's familiarity with the *-ing* form of the verb (but this time the *-ing* form functions as nominal) which is mastered as early as Grade 2. There were no clear trends nor significant differences between boys and girls in the acquisition of these structures.

Summary Observations:

What emerges from the data is that except for specific items where there were significant differences

irregular past
past progressive–simple past form contrast

which the girls acquired earlier than the boys

are
habitual present *-s* form
present perfect

TABLE 1 SUBJECT GRID

	K 1		K 2		1		2		3		4		5		6	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
High Income	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Middle Income	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Low Income	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

TABLE 3
VERBAL SUB-SYSTEM MEANS FOR GRADES
N = 30 (15 boys, 15 girls)

STRUCTURES	Number of Items	K1	K2	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1. Forms of *be* *am*	1	.20	.5	.899	[1]	1	1	1	1
is	2	.33	.58	1.63	[2]	2	2	2	2
are	3	.10	.30	2.1	[2.49]	2.69	3	3	3
2.2. Present progressive form *-ing*	19	.0	.63	14.83	[17.27]	18.83	19	19	19
2.3. Future form (*will*)	3	.0	.13	1	1.5	[1.83]	2	2	2
2.4. Regular past form *-d/ed*	7	.0	.0	1.97	4.73	[5.93]	6.27	6.899	7
2.5. Irregular past forms *came, gave, went, sang, taught*	5	.0	.0	1.10	2.10	3.37	[4.37]	4.5	4.87
2.6. *-s* Form of habitual present	6	.0	.0	.6	3.77	4.13	4.6	[5.53]	6
2.7 Past progressive form-simple past form contrast	2	.0	.0	.43	.8	1.37	1.66	[2]	2
2.8. Present perfect form for recently completed action	2	.0	.0	.07	.13	.53	.60	.83	[1.27]*
2.9. Past perfect form for past event before another past event	2	.0	.0	.07	.13	.53	.60	.83	[1.23]*

⌒ difference significant ($p < .001$) [ ] Acquisition Year *Girls did not reach 80% correct responses for the two items

TABLE 4
VERBAL SUB-SYSTEM MEANS FOR GRADES
N = 30 (15 boys, 15 girls)

STRUCTURES	Number of Items	K 1	K 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1. *Yes-No Questions* 3.1.1. *is - are*	2	.07	.23	.53	1.03	1.47	[2]	1.87	2
3.1.2. *can*	1	.0	.07	.07	.20	.77	[1]	1	1
3.1.3. *does - do*	2	.0	.10	.26	.43	.6	1.07	[1.6]	1.80
3.2. *Information Questions* 3.2.1. *what*	1	.53	.57	.77	[.97]	.97	.93	1	1
3.2.2. *who*	1	.0	.07	.27	.57	[.87]	1	1	1
3.2.3 *why*	1	.0	.0	.03	.23	.43	.73	[.87]	.899*
3.2.4 *how*	1	.0	.0	.2	.13	.6	.57	.77	[.93]*
3.2.5. *which*	1	.0	.0	.03	.07	.5	.5	.57	.7**
3.2.6. *whom*	1	.0	.0	.066	.067	.13	.23	.26	.33**

⌒ difference significant ($p < .001$). ⌒ mean should be .888 to be significaant ($p < .001$) *not acquired perfectly **not acquired by boys or girls

TABLE 5
RELATIVE CLAUSES MEANS FOR GRADES
N = 30 (15 boys, 15 girls)

STRUCTURES	Number of Items	K1	K2	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. *Relative Clauses*									
4.1. *who*	1	.0	.0	.03	.0	.13	.7	.56	.9*
4.2. *which*	1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.33	.5	.5**
4.3. *that*	1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.2	.4	.6	.6**
4.4. *whose*	1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.03	.07	.4	.43**
4.5. *whom*	1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.17	.2	.53**

TABLE 6
COMPLEMENTS MEANS FOR GRADES
N = 30 (15 boys, 15 girls)

5. *Complements*									
5.1. Gerundive complement	2	.0	.13	.63	1.33	.6	1.67	1.97	1.97*
5.2. Infinitive Complement	2	.03	.03	.30	1.33	1.2	1.47	1.97	2

*not perfectly acquired **not acquired by boys or girls

past perfect
who questions
why questions

which the boys acquired earlier than the girls, the differences for the other items were not significant, if anything, especially for the structures under the noun sub-system, the trend was in favour of the boys.

Earlier acquisition by the boys was confirmed when a one-way analysis of variance (equivalent to a simple *t*-test) was done on the scores of the boys and the girls for all thirty-seven (37) structures, with all individual scores transposed on the same 0–4 scale. The mean for boys was 2.03 and the mean for girls was 1.80, a difference of 0.22, which was found to be significant ($p < .001$). Thus, on the whole, when all structures are taken into account, there was a significant difference between the boys and girls, with the boys scoring higher than the girls.

Earlier Philippine data for first language acquisition (Gonzalez, forthcoming) show earlier mastery of structures by girls over boys.

However, neither boys nor girls attained mastery of *whom* and *which* questions even in Grade 6 nor of the relative clauses except *who*. Moreover, the girls had not mastered the past and present perfect forms even in Grade 6.

Note that in spite of the fact that the teaching programme of the school did not include any formal instruction in the English language nor the use of English as a medium of instruction in the first two years of schooling (Kindergarten 1 and 2), some significant learning nevertheless took place in *is-are* questions, *who*, *what*, and *how* questions, forms of *be* (*am* and *is*), the future form, the progressive form, the progressive form, as well as the plural form of nouns, the gender of pronouns, genitive and objective form of pronouns. One must factor into this situation the availability of the mass media to these students as reinforcing agents of language learning. It seems then that with incidental teaching, exposure to the language through its occasional use in the classroom and through the mass media, some language learning does take place, enough to make a significance between grade levels even during the first two years.

Comparison between Entry Years in Syllabus and Acquisition Years

A systematic examination was made when specific structures tested were introduced for the first time in the teaching syllabus, which was made available to the researchers.

The first time a particular structure is introduced is specified in these syllabi, which I would like to call "the entry year". The entry year is the point in time when a specific structure is introduced; it is taught formally during this grade. Presumably, the structure is used thereafter, incidentally taught, perhaps even reviewed in later years.

Table 7 lists the structures tested, indicates the entry year of these structures as shown in the syllabus of the school, and the acquisition year based on the data.

The following observation may be made based on Table 7:

1. For most of the structures in the noun sub-system, there is a time-lag of one year between entry year and acquisition year, except for gender distinction, which takes two years for acquisition. Interesting is the fact that it is not until Grade 6, three years later, that the genitive marker ('s) is mastered, for reasons already indicated. The Filipino bilingual would rather use the prepositional phrase *house of the boy* instead of *the boy's house* since it is analogous to the surface structure for possession of his first language, *bahay ng bata*.

2. In the structures under verbal sub-system, time lag between entry year (first teaching) and acquisition year (mastery) is also for the most part one year, except for the *-s* form (habitual present), which proves a difficulty for the Filipino bilingual; it is not until four years later, in Grade 5, that it is mastered. Undoubtedly, part of the difficulty has to do with pronunciation, the Filipino finding it difficult to pronounce consonant clusters of English. This feature is often never learnt by less educated Filipinos and is a probable candidate for being a permanent feature of Philippine English (the absence of the *-s* mark for third person singular present; see Gonzalez and Alberca 1978).

The progressive *-ing* form is learnt quite early (Grade 2) and used thereafter, again undoubtedly because of its analogy to the continuative present of Tagalog, e.g., *umáalís*. The problem, however, as the next section on errors attests, is that this form is overgeneralized and

TABLE 7
A COMPARISON OF ENTRY YEARS AND ACQUISITION YEARS

Structures	Entry Year in Syllabus	Acquisition Year
1. NOUN SUB-SYSTEM		
1.1. Plural form of nouns	Grade 1	Grade 2
1.2. Genitive form of nouns	Grade 3	Grade 6
1.3. Gender of pronouns (*he*)	Grade 1	Grade 3
(*she*)	Grade 1	Grade 3
(*it*)	Grade 1	Grade 3
1.4. Genitive form of pronouns (*his*)	Grade 3	Grade 4
(*their*)	Grade 3	Grade 4
(*her*)	Grade 3	Grade 4
(*hers*)	Grade 3	Grade 4
(*him*)	Grade 3	Grade 4
1.5. Objective form of pronoun (*him*)	Grade 3	
2. VERB SUB-SYSTEM		
2.1. Forms of *be*		
am	Grade 1	Grade 2
is	Grade 1	Grade 2
are	Grade 1	Grade 2
2.2. Present progressive form *-ing*	Grade 1	Grade 2
2.3. Future form *will*	Grade 2	Grade 3
2.4. Regular past form	Grade 2	Grade 3
2.5. Irregular past form	Grade 2	Grade 4
2.6. *-s* Form of habitual present	Grade 1	Grade 5
2.7. Past progressive – simple past form contrast	Grade 2	Grade 5
2.8. Present perfect form for recently completed action	Grade 6	Grade 6
2.9. Past perfect form for past event before another past event	Grade 6	Grade 6

TABLE 7 (*cont'd*)

STRUCTURES	ENTRY YEAR SYLLABUS	ACQUISITION YEAR
3. QUESTIONS 3.1. Yes-No Questions 3.1.1. *is/are*	Grade 1	Grade 4
3.1.2. *can*	Grade 2	Grade 4
3.1.3. *does/do*	Grade 3	Grade 5
3.2. Information questions 3.2.1. *what*	Grade 1	Grade 2
3.2.2. *who*	Grade 2	Grade 3
3.2. *why*	Grade 4	Grade 5
3.2.4. *how*	Grade 4	Grade 6
3.2.5. *which*	Grade 4	x
3.2.6. *whom*	Grade 5	x
4. RELATIVE CLAUSES 4.1. *who*	Grade 6	Grade 6
4.2. *which*	Grade 6	x
4.3. *that*	Grade 6	x
4.4. *whose*	Grade 6	x
4.5. *whom*	Grade 6	x
5. COMPLEMENTS 5.1. gerundive	Grade 3	Grade 4
5.2. infinitive	Grade 3	Grade 6

is used quite often even for habitual present tense, which does not call for the progressive form.

The irregular forms, because of their irregularity, have to be learnt as individual forms or clusters of past participle forms which follow a specific suppletion pattern, and take two years, probably even more (we sampled only five), to master.

Difficult are the past perfect and the present perfect forms (used in only one of their functions: past event before another past event for the past perfect and recently completed action for the present perfect) which are not taught till Grade 6 and mastered only by the males in the same grade.

The composite verb form using the past participle and the single past forms ("I was eating when you arrived"), which is taught early (Grade 2), is not mastered until Grade 5.

3. Because of the various steps (transformations) needed in forming questions, the time lag between entry year and acquisition year is longer. *Is-are* questions and *can* (modal) questions, which call for only an inversion of auxiliary and subject, are mastered in Grade 4, although *is-are* questions are introduced in the syllabus in Grade 1 and *can* questions in Grade 2.

Already mention has been made of the problems with information questions (*which* and *whom*) which are not mastered by either sex even in Grade 6. The time lag for mastering *how* questions is two years (Grade 6 and Grade 4), the rest one year.

4. For relative clauses, calling as they do for several transformation, only *who* is mastered in Grade 6, the same year it becomes an entry in the syllabus. Given the fact that for most structures there is a time lag of at least one year, it is not surprising that at the end of Grade 6, the other relative clauses using *which, that, whose*, and *whom* have not yet been mastered.

5. For complements, both introduced in Grade 3, gerundive complements (akin to the progressive *-ing* form which is mastered by Grade 2) are acquired after one year, in Grade 4, but it seems to take longer to master the infinitival complement, in Grade 6 (from Grade 3).

Coping Strategies of the Filipino English-Language Learner

A noteworthy by-product of the elicitation sessions with the learners were their "incorrect" responses which upon closer analysis give indications of their learning strategies and their attempts to cope with the expression needs of a code the rules of which they had not as yet completely mastered.

A systematic and exhaustive analysis of these responses would give valuable insights into the transitional grammars (Tucker 1977) of these learners. In this partial and preliminary report, however, only a typology of coping strategies with appropriate examples can be given, with an attempt to infer something about the transitional grammars of these learners as evidenced by their responses (see Hatch 1977 for a fourfold typology).

These levels will be examined: morphological, lexical, and syntatic, with sub-types for each level.

Morphological Level:

Simplification. Use of unmarked forms. The most common occurrence in the data of the beginning learners is the use of unmarked forms (without morphological suffixes) for use in their responses:

NOUNS	Two *girl*	Two girls
	The toy is *Baby*	The toy is Baby's
VERBS	They two *friend*	They are two friends
	Freddie *help*	Freddie helps
	They *dance*	They danced
	Girls *swim*	The girl is swimming
	He *go*	He will go
	He *wait*	He had waited

Overgeneralization. Use of forms learnt for all contexts. On the other hand, where a particular form has been learnt, it is used without the later to-be-learnt contextual constraints and is thus used indiscriminately, a case of analogy, which is well-known in the literature.

Overgeneralization of forms of

Plural	three *boyses*	three boys
	three *childrens*	three children
Be	You *is* kind.	You are kind.
Tense/Aspect Markers	How did the children *caught* the bird?	How did the children catch the bird?
	Why did the kite *fell*?	Why did the kite fall?
	He has *came*.	He has come.

Genitive Marker	Belen's holding *his* hand of Jun-Jun.	Belen is holding the hand of Jun-Jun.
Overuse of Progressive Form	I *am studying* everyday.	I study everyday.
	They *dancing*.	They dance.
Past Form	He just *brought* the message.	He has just brought the message.

Selective Application of Markers. Much more interesting are numerous examples of markers which have obviously been learnt and which may have to be applied simultaneously to a phrase or a larger construction but are applied on a selective basis. One may infer that there is a processing constraint on the performer, who can apply the markers only one or two at a time but not altogether:

The boy is kissing *her* mother.	The boy is kissing his mother.
Mother is sewing *his* dress.	Mother is sewing her dress.
He is waving *her* hand.	He is waving his hand.

where the genitive form of pronoun has been mastered but where there is a question of the more proximate noun governing the choice rather than the (correct) remote one or confusion on which form to use.

I am reading when you came. I am reading when you come.	I was reading when you came.
Pat described the fair to Ana that she saw.	Pat described the fair that she saw to Ana.

where both verbs should have been marked for the past tense.

In the progressive tenses, while the *-ing* form has been mastered, the auxiliary may still be missing, or vice-versa, the auxiliary is placed but the progressive main verb is kept in its base form:

Freddie *watering*.	Freddie is watering (the plants).
Children *running*.	The children are running.
He is *blow*.	He is blowing (his horn).

The same processing limitation is found in the perfect tenses where the following responses are given for a past perfect form:

wait (base form)	had wait
is waiting	had waited

Lexical Level:

Lexical Transfers. There is extensive data reported in the literature showing how a second-language learner, unable to find the vocabulary item he needs, automatically switches to this first or dominant language and in effect borrows the first-language lexical item and transfers it to the second language.

In the following sentence, the entire main verb is transferred from Tagalog:

Mother *nagtatahi* a *damit.*	Mother is sewing a dress.

When the child has learnt that the progressive calls for an auxiliary, the auxiliary is added to a Tagalog main verb:

Belen is *hinahawakan* the Jun-Jun hand.	Belen is holding the hand of Jun-Jun (the name of a child).

What is interesting about this is that the main verb is marked for focus (a direct loan from Tagalog) and that the possessive marker is missing. Less controversial is:

Mother is *nagtatahi.*	Mother is sewing (a dress).

where the main verb has no overt focus marker. In the second example the entire verb phrase is borrowed.

Relexification. Significant are example of English lexical items with morphological markers, which are transferred into and then given additional (supernumerary or superfluous) morphological markers. Already mention has been made of

boy*ses*	boys

It is obvious from the following that the noun form learnt has the plural marker coded in the transitional grammar as part of the lexical item or underlying form.

one *boys*	three childrens
a birds	one girls
a books	

Less clear are the following examples, which do not seem to be examples of relexification but merely of a different subclassification of count nouns and mass nouns, a subclassification which is perhaps now part of the code of adult Philippine English:

The foods
short hairs
two peoples.

Also less clear examples such as

I see *a three boys*

where *a* is out of place, and

The *ones* boy

instead of *The one boys* analogous to *The one girls* where some kind of morphological metathesis has taken place.

Language Mixture. Already mention has been made of evidence of language mixture in the lexical transfers. In the following examples, not only individual lexical items are transferred but entire phrases:

The chair is *sa pamilya.*	The chair is the family's.
The chair is *para kay Tatay.*	The chair is for Daddy.

A favourite collocation is

The cabinet is *kulay green.*	The cabinet is coloured green. OR The cabinet is green.

Or

The girls has *mahabang buhok.*	The girl has long hair.

Sometimes it is a whole verb phrase which is transferred:

Father and Tito are *nag-aayos ng silya.*	Father and Tito are arranging chairs.

One sees in these mixtures some early examples of what the adult Filipino, having mastered English, returns to later on in his code-switching, which takes place at the level of identifiable phrase and clause levels (Bautista 1977).

Syntactic Level:

The most interesting examples of syntactic coping on the part of the Filipino English-language learners is the restating of complex

sentences (especially with relative clauses) as compound sentences, a process of simplification through non-embedding at the syntactic level (see Clark and Clark 1977).

The boy has stomach aches, that's why he cried.

RESPONSE WANTED: The boy who had a stomach ache cried in pain.

The boy slept because his mother was sick.
The mother of the boy was sick, so he fell asleep.
The boy is asleep because his mother is sick.

RESPONSE WANTED: The boy whose mother was sick fell asleep.

Among the older students, to avoid *whom*, which provided difficulty, there was a preference for right-branching sentences:

The policeman ran after the man that stole the money.

RESPONSE WANTED: The man whom the policeman ran after stole the money.

In questions, the most common strategy for those who were not familiar with the rules or transformations necessary for framing questions was to use declarative sentences with a rising intonation:

That is a ball? ↑
The bananas are sweet? ↑
Nena drinks her milk every day? ↑
The children feed the animals every day? ↑
She can dance? ↑
You like what? ↑

Some of the questions indicate that the bilingual learner uses intermediate steps (analogous to first language acquisition; see Clark and Clark 1977):

He can go home?

where the declarative form is superposed with a rising intonation. eventually becoming

Can he go home?

where both intonation and subject-verb inversion have taken place. With *is-are* questions, an added difficulty is posed by the distinction which has to be made between *is* and *are*.

The following alternative responses to the questions being elicited are interesting and give a cross sectional view of different stages of acquisition:

Ball?
That ball?
That's a ball?
Is that a ball?

Or:

Sweet the bananas? (Partial translation from Tagalog *Matamis ba ang mga saging?*)

Bananas sweet?
The bananas are sweet?
Are the bananas sweet?

More complicated still are *does-do* questions, which call for several steps mastered gradually; these steps are not mastered completely till Grade 5, two years after they were introduced in Grade 3:

SAME SENTENCE RISING INTONATION — They go to school every day? ↑

DO–Insertion — Do they go to school every day? ↑

Problems arise when the unmarked from is used:

Do he go to school every day?

Does he *goes* to school every day (hypercorrection)

until it is mastered as

Does he go to school every day?

Some interesting patterns (indicative of different stages of learning) may be seen in the acquisition of *Wh-* questions, for example;

You like what? (actually, *which one*?)

What you like?
What do you like?

How the children catch the ball? (Wh-Fronting)

How the children caught the ball? (Wh-Fronting, Right Tense)

How did the children caught the ball?	(Wh-Fronting; *Do*-Insertion; Right Tense; Hypercorrection)
How did the children catch the ball?	(Wh-Fronting; *Do*-Insertion; Right-Tense; Base Form of Verb)

Still another type of syntactic device is found among younger children in the first three grades, who concatenate clauses without linkers:

There are two persons have two sunglasses.
?There are two persons who have two sunglasses.

There is one man is reading a newspaper.
?There is one man; he is reading a newspaper.

Father wearing slippers colour black.
?Father is wearing slippers; they are black OR they are coloured black.

Rather strange, and one suspects, almost a direct translation from Tagalog and therefore used rather early in the language learning game, is the following example:

The green skirt is wearing the mother. (Grade 3)

which is really

Mother is wearing a green skirt.

This is probably an attempt to do a word-for-word translation of

Ang paldang berde ay sinusuot ng ina.

The coping strategies of Filipino-English language learners are those likewise found in the literature for learners of other languages. Similar examples of simplification, lexical transfer, overgeneralization and language mixture are found in other studies. To be added to this list, as a result of the Philippine data, are relexifications, language mixture at various levels, not only lexical but phrasal, selective application of markers (a processing overload quite common even in first language acquisition), and restatements to avoid embeddings (likewise found in first language acquisition data).

Summary and Conclusions

This study has attempted to map the order and the acquisition years of specific structures of the English noun sub-system, the verb sub-system, questions, relative clauses, and complements, using Filipino subjects (boys and girls) from a middle-income group learning English in a formal classroom situation.

It is part of a larger study which systematically sampled subjects from different socioeconomic backgrounds, all being urban children in the Metro Manila area.

Individual elicitation sessions were held for 15 boys and 15 girls from each grade level and scores on stimulus items (one or more per structure) recorded individually, and analysis of variance performed on the responses of the groups.

The structures represent a small sample of the inventory of structures of the English language and are meant to be a tentative attempt at gauging mastery and to trace the process of second-language acquisition in a specific setting.

Contrary to my expectations, the girls did not perform better than the boys and did not present any indication that they learnt the structures tested earlier than the boys (presumably control was exercised on the teaching situation since the boys and girls were randomly picked from the same school, the same grade, often the same section). If anything, although not significant in all cases, the boys scored higher than the girls in most of the structures. My data on first language acquisition are not directly comparable since they were based on only a few subjects. I am nevertheless surprised to learn that the boys are better than the girls; in my limited first-language acquisition data, the girls definitely learnt language faster than the boys. Moreover, the informal observations of most teachers in the Philippines indicate that girls receive much better grades in language than do boys. Of course we were testing for grammatical items and not pronunciation; it may very well be that the female superiority is in the area of phonology. This demands further investigation.

The items on nouns and pronouns were mastered quite early (except for the genitive, which was not mastered till Grade 6); hardest to master in the verbal sub-system were the third person singular present tense form, the past perfect and present perfect tenses (not mastered by the girls even in Grade 6), *do-does* questions (Grade

5) and *which* and *whom* questions, not mastered even in Grade 6 by boys or girls. Late in being learnt were *how* (Grade 6) and *why* questions (Grade 5).

Relative clauses (except for *who*) were not mastered even in Grade 6: Easier were complements (gerundives were mastered in Grade 4 and infinitival complements in Grade 5).

It seems that these structures (assuming that the instruments have at least construct validity and are a fair sample of English structures in general) are not learnt in any one year but learnt all throughout from Grades 2 to 6, with most of them learnt in Grade 4. Out of 29 structures learnt, the breakdown is as follows:

Grade 2	6 structures
Grade 3	5 structures
Grade 4	8 structures
Grade 5	5 structures
Grade 6	5 structures

If one were to consider all these structures as in effect part of the initial stage of language learning (as contrasted with the intermediate and advanced), then one can say in general that at least in the Philippine setting, among Filipinos of middle-class background in an urban community learning their English in a formal classroom situation through a bilingual programme where certain subjects are taught in English, some in Filipino, and where there is a community and mass media supportive of both languages, not all the structures necessary for the initial stage of language learning have been mastered even after six years. Of course we have used a discrete type of evaluation measure; if one were to use an integrated approach to measure language competence, one can say that fluency and communicative competence in the expression of basic needs is probably reached earlier. At least, this was the impression of the elicitors.

All during the six grades, children continue to learn new structures which are necessary for basic competence in the language. Considering that even after six years relative clauses and certain types of questions (*which* and *whom*) have not yet been mastered productively, one must propose that even in secondary school, in the Philippine setting at least, for this particular social class, the learning of basic structures for the initial level of language mastery must continue.

I am thinking not only of relative clauses and *whom, which* questions but embedded constructions, more complicated sentential complements, cleft sentences, and various forms of *if*-clauses (real and unreal) calling for the subjunctive and the optative, which must still be mastered.

The comparison between entry years and acquisition years has interesting implications for curriculum construction and materials production. While entry points must be specified, we must make room in the syllabus and the teaching plan for systematic repetition and build-up since there is a time lag of one or more years before a structure is acquired; even after formal teaching, certain structures (undoubtedly because of their complicated nature, which can be indicated by the number of morphological and syntactic changes called for) take more time to master than others. Thus a project of this type has implications for indicating the time lag before mastery, perhaps an indication of difficulty, and for suggesting expected exit points of the syllabus after a particular structure has been mastered. A cyclical pattern of instruction may be necessary to ensure that certain structures are eventually mastered. For some it takes as many as six years before a structure is acquired, partially a function of the mental maturity of the learner. Perhaps with adult learners, this time lag can be reduced through more systematic explanations followed by creative practice and drill.

Where certain structures, even after several years beyond the entry point, have not yet been acquired, a re-examination of the teaching plan, the syllabus, and perhaps the inherent difficulty of the structure, calling for more intellectual maturation from the learner, is called for. A subsequent research project should indicate whether first-language learners have the same difficulties with relative clauses and *which* and *whom* questions and at what age they master these structures.

Finally, in the study of the errors of the learners, not systematically counted in this study but gathered together and typologized, one gets an indication of the coping strategies of the learner (these should be compared with similar coping strategies of first language learners) and of the transitional grammars of these learners. One likewise gains insight into the language performer's language processing, obtains indicators of language learning difficulties, and above all, finds evidence for the grammar-formulating faculty of man.

APPENDIX A

Outline of Forms to Be Elicited

1. Noun Sub-System

   1.1. Plural form of nouns (4 items)
   1.2. Genitive form of nouns (3 items)
   1.3. Gender of pronouns *he* (1 item)
   she (2 items)
   it (4 items)

   1.4. Genitive form of pronouns *his* (3 items)
   theirs (1 item)
   her (1 item)
   hers (1 item)
   1.5. Objective form of pronouns *him* (1 item)

2. Verb Sub-System

   2.1. Forms of *Be* *am* (1 item)
   is (2 items)
   are (3 items)
   2.2 Present progressive form *-ing* (19 items)
   2.3. Future form *will* (3 items)
   2.4. Regular past form *-d/-ed* (7 items)
   2.5. Irregular past forms *came gave went sang taught* (5 items)
   2.6. *-s* Form of habitual present (6 items)
   2.7. Past progressive form–simple past form contrast (2 items)
   e.g., "I was reading when you arrived."
   2.8. Present perfect form for recently completed action (2 items)
   e.g., "I have just arrived."
   2.9. Past perfect form for past event before another past event
   e.g., "I had already come when you arrived." (2 items)

3. Questions

   3.1. Yes-No Questions

      3.1.1. *is-are* (2 items)
      3.1.2. *can* (1 item)
      3.1.3. *does-do* (2 items)

   3.2. Information Questions

      3.2.1. *what* (1 item)
      3.2.2. *who* (1 item)
      3.2.3. *why* (1 item)

3.2.4. *how* (1 item)
3.2.5 *which* (1 item)
3.2.6. *whom* (1 item)

4. Relative Clauses

4.1. *who* (1 item)
4.2. *which* (1 item)
4.3. *that* (1 item)
4.4. *whom* (1 item)
4.5. *whom* (1 item)

5. Complements

5.1. Gerundive complement (2 items)
e.g., "I like swimming."
5.2. Infinitive complement (2 items)
e.g., "I want to swim."

NOTE

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